NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION

Information Letter

FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

No. 290 | Washington, D. C. | January 5, 1929

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Convention Promises to be Record Breaker

Measured by the importance of the subjects to be considered, the character of the speakers on the program, and the advance room reservations, the Chicago Convention promises to be a record breaker both in achievements and attendance.

Outstanding among the topics is the subject of distribution, with particular reference to the proposed amendment of the Food and Drugs Act which would require the informative labeling of canned foods of inferior quality. At the Monday afternoon meeting this subject will be discussed from the legal standpoint, and from the point of view of the canners, the distributors and the related industries.

Tariff revision, another topic of immediate interest to every branch of the industry, is on the program of each section, which will have before it for consideration such recommendations as may be prepared at the tariff conference meeting to be held in Chicago one week prior to the Convention.

Third among the topics to be discussed in its various phases will be the extension of the information service for canners, in the way of broader and better reports on canning crops, production of canned foods, stocks, etc.

The consumer's viewpoint will be presented at a number of the section meetings and there will also be addresses on technical subjects. At the joint session of canners and distributors on Monday evening, the results of the study of hand-to-mouth buying by the Institute of Economics will be presented.

Entertainment features include the brokers convention dinner, the annual dinner dance, the Anchor Cap and Closure Corporation dinner, and the theater party tendered by the American Can Company.

Programs for the convention have been mailed to the members, along with a letter regarding special railroad rates and the plans for a directory at the Stevens Hotel.

Vegetable Situation in Sonora

Preliminary estimates of the vegetable crops in the State of Sonora on the Mexican West Coast indicate that the exportable surplus of peas this year will be somewhat lower than last year but that the exports of tomatoes may be somewhat larger, according to a report from the American Consul at Guaymas. The State of Sonora in the past has produced over 90 per cent of the peas but only around 12 per cent of the tomatoes grown on the Mexican West Coast. It is now estimated that a total of approximately 1,700 to 1,800 carloads of perishables will be available for export from Sonora this season. Of that quantity, tomatoes will constitute from 540 to 575 carloads, peas from 1,000 to 1,200 carloads and miscellaneous vegetables about 98 carloads.

The total area planted to peas and tomatoes in the Yaqui, Mayo and Guaymas river valleys in the State of Sonora during the 1928-29 season amounts to 16,035 acres as compared with 18,624 acres in 1927-28. No acreage figures are available for plantings of other perishable crops, but these are relatively unimportant and no material change is expected. The decline in the pea and tomato acreage this season is due to the decrease of 6,400 acres in plantings in the Mayo Valley as a result of the losses sustained in December, 1927, when floods seriously damaged plantings. The area in the Yaqui Valley, however, increased by 3,700 acres this year.

The first exports of this season's Sonora tomatoes reached Nogales on November 19 and the first shipment of peas on December 6. All indications at present point to a very favorable year. An increase of 20 per cent in freight rates on the Rio Mayo Railway may adversely affect producers along that line, particularly later in the season.

The exportable surplus of tomatoes, peas, and miscellaneous products from Sonora during 1928-29 has been estimated by the Consul as follows: Tomatoes, 575 carloads; peas, 1,020 carloads; miscellaneous, 98 carloads. The Southern Pacific Railroad has estimated the exportable surplus as follows: Tomatoes, 541 carloads; peas, 1,171 carloads; miscellaneous, 98 carloads.

Business Conditions

The volume of money turnover during the week ended December 29, 1928, was greater than in the corresponding week of 1927, according to the weekly statement of the Department of Commerce. The general index of wholesale prices was slightly stronger than in the preceding week, being higher also than a year ago.

Loans and discounts of Federal reserve member banks showed further expansion. Interest rates on time money averaged higher than in either the previous week or in the same period of 1927. Prices for stocks averaged higher than in the previous week. Bond prices showed a fractional gain over the preceding week but were still below the level of 1927. Business failures were less numerous during the last week of the year than in the same period of 1927.

CAR LOADINGS

	Total	Miscellaneous	Merchandise L. C. L.	Other
Week ended December 22	897,968	315,127	241,649	341,192
Preceding week	964,086	347,042	251,984	365,060
Corresponding week, 1927	829,810	276,941	236,043	316,826
Corresponding week, 1926	766,040	247,304	207,539	311,197

Truck Crop Markets

Glancing backward over 1928, increased total production of apples was accompanied by fairly good prices in the East and North and by rather moderate returns in the West, where heavy crops were harvested, according to the U. S. Market News Service report for the week ended December 29.

The grape season was very unsatisfactory in California, but eastern and northern producers fared reasonably well. Onions and cabbage hold a strong position because of reduced plantings in the East and the relatively light supplies on hand. Sweet potatoes are in a much more favorable position than last season. Production of peaches and pears was greatly increased over the light crops of 1927, with a corresponding drop in prices. More citrus fruit also is available this winter. The year 1928 may be characterized as one when fruit and vegetable crops, in general, were heavier than necessary to supply the market requirements, and reduced acreages of most products would seem advisable for 1929.

In line with this policy, it is of interest to note that growers of early potatoes in the South apparently intend to plant about 30 per cent less land to this crop than was used in 1928.

Combined shipments of the leading products during late December dropped to an average of only 1,600 carloads daily, but were greater than during the same period in 1927.

The estimate of tomato acreage on the lower East Coast of Florida is 18,000, or 7,000 acres more than last year and the heaviest plantings in the last five seasons.

Movement of spinach was increasing from Texas, while the output of Virginia was decreasing. Strawberries were beginning to arrive from Florida, and, as usual, first receipts were bringing high prices.

CARLOT SHIPMENTS

Commodity	Dec. 23-29 1928	Dec. 16-22 1928	Dec. 25-31 1927	Total this season to Dec. 29	Total last season to Dec. 31	Total last season
Apples, total	1,171	1,445	826	97,945	74,339	93,094
Western	654	716	430	48,745	37,250	48,679
Eastern	517	729	396	49,200	37,089	44,415
Cabbage:						
1929 season	58	42	111	144	249	34,288
1928 season	539	333	524	34,288	33,123	39,067
Carrots:						
1929 season	93	151	(a)	1,411	(a)	6,459
1928 season	40	50	(a)	6,459	(a)	6,852
Peas:						
Domestic	1	10	2	410	305	4,660
Imports	50	27	26	127	75	987
Mixed vegetables:						
Domestic	392	483	487	32,980	35,050	36,050
Imports	3	7	1	26	10	415
Pears	46	90	41	23,553	18,269	18,744
Peppers:						
Domestic	9	5	31	31	524	3,561
Imports	14	13	8	39	12	743
Spinach	251	285	192	1,885	2,199	10,808
String beans:						
Domestic	22	34	25	355	1,280	6,686
Imports	1	0	0	2	0	2
Sweet potatoes	314	335	319	12,655	15,742	23,399
Tomatoes:						
1929 season	54	113	83	466	319	30,054
1928 season	4	14	1	30,054	32,663	32,663
Imports	202	344	157	1,084	695	5,423

(a) Unavailable

Wholesale and Retail Trade in November

Wholesale distribution showed a decrease in November, but the reduction was smaller than is usual at this season. Combined dollar sales of the nine lines of trade reporting to the Federal reserve system decreased 14 per cent, the largest decreases being reported for drugs, men's and women's clothing, and furniture.

Stocks of goods held by reporting wholesale firms were smaller at the end of November than a month earlier in four lines of trade—dry goods, boots and shoes, hardware, and drugs. Stocks of groceries were larger than in the previous month and furniture stocks showed little change.

As compared with November, 1927, larger merchandise inventories were reported by wholesalers of groceries, boots and shoes, drugs and furniture, while stocks of dry goods and hardware were smaller.

Changes in the stocks and sales of wholesale groceries, by districts, are shown in the following table, (increase or decrease (—) per cent):

Districts	Sales: November, 1928, compared with—		Stocks: November, 1928, compared with—	
	October, 1928	November, 1927	October, 1928	November, 1927
	Per cent	*Per cent*	*Per cent*	*Per cent*
United States	— 7.4	— 0.5	1.7	4.2
Boston	— 4.1	— 3.6	...	...
New York	— 7.8	— 1.5	4.6	— 0.6
Philadelphia	—16.5	— 0.2	1.9	4.0
Cleveland	—10.4	— 1.9	4.6	2.4
Richmond	— 9.4	— 2.1	3.5	0.8
Atlanta	— 8.1	4.0	3.6	14.3
Chicago	— 5.8	0.7	1.3	1.6
St. Louis	— 8.1	— 1.1	— 1.1	22.3
Minneapolis	— 8.0	— 5.0	1.0	— 2.0
Kansas City	— 0.1	7.6	1.8	11.8
Dallas	—12.3	11.7	1.6	8.6
San Francisco	— 7.4	2.7	1.3	0.4

Department store sales in November were larger than in the preceding month, according to the Federal Reserve Board's index, which is adjusted for seasonal variations and for number of business days. As compared with the corresponding month a year ago, sales were in about the same volume.

Sales of mail order houses and of all lines of chain stores were larger in November this year than a year ago. Increases in dollar sales of both of these types of firms reflect in part the establishment during the year of additional outlets. The largest percentages of increase in sales for the period among the chain stores were shown by those selling groceries, apparel and dry goods, and drugs, while the reports of candy and cigar chains reflected the smallest increases.

Sales of grocery chain stores were 16.1 per cent greater than in November, 1927. This percentage is based on reports from 29,929 stores in 1928, and 29,269 in 1927.

Recommendations of European Corn Borer Committee

The Joint Committee on the European Corn Borer at its meeting in Washington this week recommended the development of the research, educational and quarantine programs of the state and federal governments, and the appropriation of funds necessary to maintain and expand these activities.

A large federal appropriation for the compulsory clean-up campaign was not favored by the Committee for the following reasons: (1) The break in the continuity of the clean-up pro-

gram in 1928 due to the failure of the appropriation for this purpose; (2) the impossibility of securing an appropriation for this purpose; (3) the impracticability of enforcing clean-up measures under the present state laws.

Estimate of Canned Food Shipments

The Shippers Regional Advisory Boards of the American Railway Association have estimated the carload shipments of 29 principal commodities that will be made during the first quarter of 1929 at 8,048,075 cars, an increase of about 5 per cent above the corresponding period of 1928. It is estimated that the shipments of canned foods, including jams, jellies, etc., will be 38,666 cars as compared with actual shipments of 39,358 cars in the corresponding period of 1928. The anticipated decrease in shipments of canned foods is, accordingly, 1.8 per cent.

Fertilizer Trade Practice Conference Called

At the request of the National Fertilizer Association a trade practice conference for the fertilizer industry has been called by the Federal Trade Commission. It will be held in Washington on January 29.

French Duties on Canned Pineapples

As a result of protests from the trade and other interested parties, a change in the rate of duty applying to pineapples canned in juice imported into France has recently been announced.

According to information received from the American Trade Commissioner at Paris, the "Bulletin Douanier" of December 4, published a note to the Director of Customs in accordance with which the sugar tolerance for pineapples canned in natural juice, without sugar or syrup, is raised to 20 per cent. The percentage of sugar tolerance for the other canned fruits remains at 10 per cent.

The percentage of sugar tolerance will hereafter be calculated on the basis of the entire net weight of fruit and juice instead of the weight of the fruit alone.

British Canning Industry

At the annual luncheon of the National Food Canning Council, the chairman of the Council, stated that the present pack of peas and other vegetables in the United Kingdom was only about

1,000,000 cans per year, according to a report recently received by the Department of Commerce from the American Trade Commissioner at London. In proportion to the population he estimated that the country should be packing about 800,000,000 cans per year. He further stated that, owing to its rapid expansion, the canning industry of the country had already gone ahead of the growers and that the cooperation of growers and canners was needed for further growth. The aid that the medical authorities could give in overcoming the public prejudice toward canned foods was also emphasized.

British Preference Duties for Canned Salmon

It is claimed that canned salmon is one of the products responsible for launching the British Government upon an extensive program to build up among consumers a voluntary preference for Empire products, according to a report recently received from the American Trade Commissioner at London. This dates back to the Imperial Conference in 1923, when the British Government offered certain advantages to the Dominions and Colonies, among which was promised the granting of a preferential tariff on canned fish and apples from Empire sources.

The producers of canned salmon and apples were both disappointed, and while the apple industry has received a certain amount of help from the Empire Marketing Board since its organization, the canned salmon producers are complaining that they have been slighted entirely and had nothing to compensate them in any way for the failure to receive preferential tariff. The Empire salmon canners base their arguments almost entirely against the Russian and Japanese canned salmon. They complain that it is not fair for them to compete with Japanese and Russian packers who have so much cheaper labor available.

While Canada has lost ground since 1925 as a supplier of canned salmon to Great Britain, the United States has about maintained its share in this trade, and other countries have greatly increased their proportions. The following table of imports into Great Britain indicates the drop in the Canadian trade:

From—	1925	1926	Nine months ending Sept. 30 1927	1928
United States:				
Pounds	28,856,112	22,171,072	25,813,088	12,861,296
Per cent	37.0	32.7	33.45	33.45
Canada:				
Pounds	23,458,848	12,539,184	14,038,976	6,334,496
Per cent	30.6	18.5	19.25	17.45
Other countries:				
Pounds	24,765,776	33,190,976	33,040,448	17,976,416
Per cent	32.4	48.8	45.3	47.1

Experiments With Devices to Prevent Salmon Being Lost in Irrigation Ditches

During the last session of Congress money was appropriated for the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries to develop means for preventing the losses of young salmon and other fishes in irrigation canals and diversion ditches.

The Bureau immediately secured the services of Mr. Shirley Baker, of San Francisco, a highly trained engineer, who has been making a study of all devices of promise in overcoming the difficulty. Over 30 projects in Montana, Oregon, Idaho and Washington were visited.

Investigations disclosed that a revolving mechanical screen of the type developed by the Oregon State Game Commission worked satisfactorily for the smaller installations. Because of the high cost and physical difficulties involved in screening a large waterway with a mechanical screen of sufficient fineness to keep out fish, investigators have sought other means of accomplishing this purpose and efforts have been directed mainly to the principle of an electric fish "screen," "stop" or "diverter." The device in its common form proposes a series of electrodes placed in the water and so arranged and supplied with electric current as to create an electrified zone of water through which the fish will not pass. Pioneer installations were unsatisfactory. Much valuable information on the principles involved resulted from studies by Prof. F. O. McMillan, Department of Electrical Engineering, Oregon Agricultural College.

Early in the present summer T. H. Burkey of Pasadena, Calif., asked for an opportunity to demonstrate a new type of screen. Preliminary experiments were so successful as to warrant tests under actual conditions on a large diversion canal. Such a test was made on a canal 30 feet wide at point of installation, extending over a period of a month, with very satisfactory results indicating that this type is a practical device.

The investigators also had an opportunity for considerable study of fish ladders for carrying fish over dams and much valuable data were obtained. For dams 100 feet or more in height no fish ladders or mechanical lifting devices were found in successful operation.